

**STATEMENT BY DR. ALLAN K. BIRABI, UGANDA’S
REPRESENTATIVE AT 202ND UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD
SESSION, OCTOBER, 2017**

The Chairperson;
President of the General Conference;
Director General;
Excellences;
Distinguished Delegates;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

As we commence business at this 202nd Executive Board, the Delegation of Uganda joins other delegations to express utmost sympathy and condolences to the governments and people of Mexico, the US, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, Virgin Islands, and Japan, following a recent wave of varied natural disasters spanning earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, storms, and flooding. Whereas words can do little, please rest assured of Uganda’s deepest sympathies. On that note, Uganda wishes to re-echo, that climate change is real, and therefore appeals to nations still in doubt to re-dedicate their support for the 1992 UN Framework Convention and the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate change.

Excellences, since our last session in April 2017, Uganda has registered a number of positive strides within UNESCO’s fields of competence. On the frontier of Global citizenship Education, Uganda has already executed a local situational analysis, engaged in the development and piloting of associated

curriculum material, teacher training orientation, and mobilization of the necessary fiscal and monetary support for this enterprise.

In fields of Social and Human Sciences, and cognate affairs of the youth, my Delegation is happy to report that the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO has partnered with the Episcopal Conference of Uganda in a unique Pilot Youth Empowerment Project in the previously war-torn northern Uganda to transform youth into agents of peace-building and socio-economic development. Northern Uganda is renowned for the longest running insurgency in Africa in the 1990s and 2000s, by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army.

Excellences, the region's schools are now the laboratories for implementing the project with the youth channeling their energies in right direction using home-grown social and human sciences study programs. Already, the project is showing impressive potential for replication across other former spots of conflicts in Africa.

In this connection, Chairperson and Excellences, my Delegation wishes to draw your attention to a component of '*Category II Institutes and Centres*' funded by Member States in support of UNESCO's strategic programme objectives. The component in view is the Lilongwe-based Guidance, Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa (GCYDCA) established by the African Ministers of Education in 1994 as a Regional Centre to coordinate and manage the guidance, counseling and development of the youth in Africa.

Utterly grateful to Malawian government for the land for the Centre and granting it diplomatic status, Uganda is among 16 initial state parties, which agreed to establish the Centre. Through financial resources and relevant logistics from UNESCO, and the provision of annual subscriptions, technical support, and human resources by Member States, the Centre lived up to its expectations up to as recent as 2015.

However, Chairperson and Excellences, since 2016 some confusion has arisen in that the Centre gained the host country's national academic accreditation and was re-named: 'Africa University of Guidance, Counseling and Youth Development', and most member States got disconnected from it save for Uganda, South Africa and Nigeria. Madam Director General, my delegation would appreciate some clarification in as far as continuity of the entity's 'Category II Institutes and Centres' status is concerned, and the way forward for its supposed rotational leadership management regime.

In closing, Chairperson and Excellences, the Delegation of Uganda also wishes to join previous speakers in bidding farewell to our out-going Director General and as well as the Board Chairperson, Ambassador Michael Worbs. The Ugandan Delegation wishes to say a big *Thank You*, to your Excellency, Madam Director-General Irina Bokova, for all the charisma you have exerted throughout your term of office for UNESCO to prosper, for being a great colleague and friend, and in fact a personal friend of Uganda, and we wish you the very best for a long and happy retirement, hopefully in Uganda, as you may recall having expressed this wish at a farewell luncheon of my former Ambassador to France, Her Excellency Nimisha Madhvani, in April this year.

Finally, by close of business of this 202nd session, my term of office as a Board member will have also expired. As there may be no other opportunity to appreciate you all, I end with these farewell remarks with a reflection, that it has been a great privilege for me to serve this highly reputed organization, and I thank my State Party, Uganda, for having given me the opportunity and for UNESCO for having accepted me to serve in this position.

My entire tenure of office on the Board has been a most fulfilling opportunity to gain valuable experience in the dynamics of the UN System. I thank all of you for your friendship and the honor of having worked with you. For colleagues whose membership is also expiring with this 202nd session, I wish you the very best as you move to other careers, and for the rest of you who will stay on, I wish you much success in your deliberations. I thank you.